

SENATOR
CATHY GIESSEL

Senate President

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Alaska State Legislature



REPRESENTATIVE
BRYCE EDGMON

Speaker of the House

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

September 11, 2019

Jim Johnsen, President
University of Alaska
PO Box 755000
Fairbanks, AK 99775

President Johnsen:

The University of Alaska has confronted a number of serious challenges over the last several years, but perhaps none as onerous as the budget cuts that have occurred during the current fiscal year. The magnitude of the reductions will engender difficult and, at times, unpopular organizational change. We acknowledge the complex decision-making involved and appreciate your steady hand and strong leadership during this period of transition.

The Board of Regents have established educational attainment, workforce development, and economic growth as strategic goals, and we encourage you to push forward on those significant state priorities. Since 2014, the Legislature has strongly encouraged the University to take steps to increase efficiencies, streamline the organization, and become more responsive to changing market demands. We applaud the rigor and seriousness with which you have consistently addressed those concerns, whether through Strategic Pathways or other reform initiatives. However, given the gravity of current circumstances, we are left with no other choice but to suggest that the current pace of change needs to be accelerated.

In this year's operating budget, the Legislature specifically directed the Regents to study transitioning from three separately accredited universities, to a single accreditation model, and to report back by December 1st. Consistent with that direction and prior legislative guidance, it is worth noting the August 13th agreement between the Regents and Governor Dunleavy, also puts a singular focus on structural consolidation, administrative overhead, and consideration of a single accreditation.

Since the legislature concluded its business in early August, we've closely monitored the board's activities and appreciate the deliberative process you have developed to provide a pathway forward in this challenging fiscal environment. We have confidence in your ability to proceed in a

thoughtful, expeditious manner, while being mindful of the need to minimize any disruption to students, faculty and staff. We look forward to receiving your progress report by December 1st.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy Giessel". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Cathy Giessel
Senate President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryce Edgmon". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Bryce Edgmon
Speaker of the House